



Good Works, Inc. — A Community of Hope

Celebrating 37 Years!

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Keith Wasserman, Founder/Executive Director

"I made the WIDOW'S heart sing, I took up the case of the STRANGER, I was a father to the FATHERLESS."
(Job 29:12-13)

Dear Friends,

March 2018

At Good Works, we believe it's true that hearts and minds are transformed through service, and that anyone who looks outside themselves to intentionally meet the needs of others will grow. However, I will confess that I find it tempting to focus too much on what I will get out of any given experience or learn from any given relationship—to give the question, "is it good for *me*?" too much weight. It is easy sometimes to get caught up in my own comfort, and use it as an excuse to be ignorant about the lives of my neighbors and the issues that face our area. But service, by its nature, requires some measure of inconvenience, sacrifice or even suffering. — Andrea Horsch

A few weeks ago, former staff, interns, and volunteers reflected on the lasting impact that a season of service at Good Works had on their lives. Many wrote in some way about the way that the love they *felt* for people matured as they put it into *action*.

Although I entered the internship experience with what I thought was a passion for the poor, I quickly recognized that I knew so little about what I supposedly had a passion about. Through the examples of Keith and the other Good Works staff, I entered a community where loving one's neighbor was more than a verbal refrain. The concrete actions of service opened my heart to what it means to love one's neighbor, especially our neighbors who are poor and/or otherwise vulnerable. My views on what it means to be poor, and what it means to live in authentic community will never be the same. My experiences during these two summers have impacted how I spend both my time and money for a lifetime; it furthermore enhanced my practice as a pastoral counselor. —Elizabeth (Franko) Parker participated in the Summer Service Internship in 2006 & 2007.

Just last week, when I was feeling too frustrated by a friend of mine to show him compassion, my wife reminded me of a lesson we first learned at Good Works. Wounded people in survival mode will sometimes hurt you, even when you're trying to love them. That's one reason why we need partners—community, The Body—to really love and serve people well. If one of us gets stepped on in the process, someone else is there to pick up the load and maintain compassion. It's been 15 years since we left Athens and began an intentional interracial community in the heart of Detroit, but the lessons from our years at Good Works are with us all the time. What we learned there shaped so much of our lives today: how we relate across lines of class & race, how we live out the Great Commission, even how we understand the big picture of God's Kingdom. We are so thankful for the Community of Hope that opened our eyes and hearts. — Matt & Bev Hale served with Good Works from 1998 to 2002. They were involved with Friday Night Life and helped us launch an initiative we called Life-on-Life mentoring.

Good Works was much more than a summer internship for me. It was a transformative time in my life that helped me discover paths in leadership and stewardship of Biblical social justice and mercy. I've always sensed a calling to work with vulnerable populations, but for a long time, I had no idea what that looked like lived out. After searching and serving with several organizations, I found Good Works, a community of hope that serves *with* the poor not *to* the poor. I saw and lived in a community where genuine relationships formed, intentional living occurred, vulnerability was honored, and all people were treated with dignity, worth, and respect. I witnessed a community and a leadership that operated out of their values of integrity and put people over their programs. The trajectory of my life changed after serving at Good Works, and God clearly set me on a path toward social work. I went back to school for my Masters, and now I'm passionate about educating others on experiencing the Kingdom of God by being with and loving those who are seen by the world as the least. – *Paige Christian was a Summer Service Intern in 2008.*

Several years [after we left Good Works], we were in a new state with new children trying to fit into a new place. It was not going so well, and we sought God for wisdom about our nagging sense of loss and confusion. Then we realized that Good Works had ruined us—ruined us in so many good ways. It ruined our ability to tolerate incomplete and one-sided expressions of the gospel. It ruined our habit of turning a blind eye to the presence of Jesus in the vulnerable people around us. It ruined us for shallow Christian relationships that require no sacrifice and exist only within the walls of the church. It ruined our capacity to separate Sunday morning worship from how we live in our local community. Life has never been the same since Good Works ruined us, and for that we will be eternally grateful. –*Bart & Anne Bruehler served on the full time staff as Hannah House Managers in the late 1990s and early 2000s.*

IN THE NEWS...

- **THANK YOU** to those of you who participated and supported the 16th Annual Good Works WALK! We will be sharing more on this next month.
- TRAINING FOR LIFE is our computer training class that has been going on for more than 15 years. We host two formal sessions each week at The Timothy House, and residents can use the computers at other times once they have taken one class.
- Since our beginning, we have been very committed to the safety of our neighborhoods both on Central Avenue and Luhrig Road. We really try to be attentive to our neighbors and to look out for matters of safety and security.
- Friday Night Life (FNL) is sustained by the partnerships of almost 50 groups a year who sponsor the dinner and help to make FNL happen. Our partnerships at all levels of Good Works are fortified by three essential ingredients: trust, good communication, and integrity.
- Did you know you can give a gift to Good Works in honor of someone? Contact us for more information or visit this section on the front page of our website.
- **Week of Service** is a one-week opportunity to serve with Good Works this year. We provide housing and food. For more information and an application, visit our website or call us. Applicants must be at least 16 years old.

IN CLOSING, I want to share that it is my conviction that *all of us* are called to work *together*, support one another, and use the resources we have to come alongside our neighbors who are experiencing poverty and vulnerability. We will encounter hardship, but, in truth, we can count it a privilege and a trust to be present in people's lives, walking with them and loving them.

Love is a verb,



Keith Wasserman